

## Sutter National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Water Update

Current Conditions as of November 22, 2015

- Sutter NWR staff have started flooding wetlands within the Sutter Bypass
- The rate of flood-up will be contingent on the volume of water available in the East Borrow Channel of the Sutter Bypass
- Refuge staff will prioritize flooding based on efficiency and habitat quality, which will result in units in both the hunting area and sanctuary flooding as water is available
- Refuge staff are not able to determine an exact date when Sutter NWR will open to hunting due to uncertainties in water availability, however it will open once the hunting area and sanctuary are both 50% flooded
- Lack of summer irrigations due to drought conditions minimized the amount of waterfowl food plants (water grass and smartweed) that were produced on refuge wetlands
- Reduced summer and fall flooding allowed more disking to be completed opportunistically to manage invasive plants; although this will create a greater challenge when walking in the marshes, it will result in improved habitat conditions (i.e. more food and less invasive plants) in future years
- Refuge staff will be working with California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff to open Sutter NWR in an efficient and timely manner once the hunting area is 50% flooded
- Refuge staff will update the Sacramento NWR Complex website as conditions change (<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sacramento/>)